Removal of silt from canals

1383. SHRI RAMACHANDRA KHUNTIA: Will the Minister of WATER RESOURCES be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government have any plan for removal of silt from canals network and its repair/renovation across the country;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c).J if not, the reasons therefor; and

(d) the fresh steps taken by Government to formulate a National Project for time-bound repair/renovation/desilting of existing canal network across the country in order to avoid large scale seepage/ overflow/wastage of precious water meant for irrigation purposes?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF WATER RESOURCES (SHRIMATI BIJOYA CHAKRAVARTY): (a) to (d) Irrigation being a State subject, the responsibility of planning, investigation, funding alongwith priority, execution, operation and maintenance of irrigation projects primarily rests with the concerned State Governments themselves. Hence, the Central Government has not formulated any project for removal of silt from canals network and its repair/renovation across the country.

techno-economic feasibility of inter-linking of rivers

1384. SHRIMATI BIMBA RAIKAR: Will the Minister of WATER RESOURCES be pleased to state:

(a) whether a seminar was recently held at Anand with experts from Columbia-based International Water Management Institute deliberating on the techno-economic feasibility of the proposed mega project on inter-linking of national rivers;

(b) whether the experts have estimated the total project cost of river inter-linking a whopping Hs. 5,76,000 crores with a gestation period of 40 years; and

(c) whether the seminar recommended adoption of small/localised solutions closer to users rather than mega projects?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF WATER RESOURCES (SHRIMATI BIJOYA CHAKRAVARTY): (a) to (c) The information for answering the question is being collected and will be laid on the Table of the House.

Disposal off publicly owned rivers

1385. SHRI A. VIJAYA RAGHAVAN: Will the Minister of WATER RESOURCES be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government's attention has been drawn to the news-item which appeared in The Hindu' dated the 23rd January, 2003 captioned, "Rivers's and and People's survival" is in the attention of the competent authority;

(b) if so, the details of the sale negotiation for disposal of publicly owned rivers/sand for the last two years, if any;

(c) the category-wise and State-wise details for the last three years;

(d) if so, the action taken to rectify if; and

(e) if not, the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF WATER RESOURCES (SHRIMATI BIJOYA CHAKRAVARTY): (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) to (e) Sand may be treated as major or minor mineral depending on the usage of the same. Rule 70 of the Mineral Concession Rules (MCR), 1960 defines the use of sand as major mineral. When used for